Interview with Mr. Giles Kelly , 2011

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

GILES KELLY

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

Initial interview date: December 2, 2010

Q: All right. Today is the 2nd of December, 2010 and this is an interview with Giles Kelly, and it's G-I-L-E-S, and then K-E-L-L-Y. And this is being done for the Association for the Diplomatic Studies and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. And Giles, let's start. When and where were you born?

KELLY: I was born in Bronxville, New York, which is in Westchester County, a suburb of New York City.

Q: When?

KELLY: 1921.

Q: OK. Tell me about your family in your father's side. What do you know about that?

KELLY: My father was a graduate of University of Maine in electrical engineering at the brink of World War I. He volunteered to go into the Navy as an officer with a sort of 90-day training at the Naval Academy, and he served on the staff of admirals as a radio officer. After the war he left the Navy and his main hobby was amateur radio.

Q: And do you know where the Kelly's come from? It sounds Irish, but do you have any idea where they came from or?

KELLY: Yes. There's a place in Devon in England called Kelly. I've been there to see if there is a connection with the John Kelly who settled in what is now Newbury, Massachusetts in 1635. He came over on a ship called the Hector. We think that he was one of the Kellys from Devon who was a second son. We've seen the record and there was a second son named John Kelly. So that's the connection, but we can not be absolutely certain. But I did ask the Kellys living in England what they knew about their manor house in Kelly. They said, “This manor house was listed in the doomsday book.” So those Kellys and perhaps my Kellys go back to 1066.

Q: Well, of the Kellys your great-grandfather, great-great grand — what were they up to before your father ended up in Maine?

KELLY: They were mostly farmers in New England. Some of them were in the church. My grandfather was a banker. I think a few of them were bankers. Nobody was especially prominent or wealthy. There was a Kelly, an ancestor who was called Yellowstone Kelly who went out west and became a well-known scout in Yellowstone Park area. The Kellys fought in the Revolution. I recall my father was a member of The Sons of the American Revolution.

Q: All right. How about your mother? What's her background?

KELLY: She was a New Yorker. She met my father here in Washington during or just after I guess World War I.

Q: World War I.

KELLY: Yes, She had gone to college out in Montana. I don't know whether she finished or not, but I think that it was interrupted by the War and she came to work for the Red Cross

here in Washington. Her father was named Johnston with a T, and they were Scottish.—that would be her grandfather, emigrated from Scotland and married a German immigrant named Amelia Fiddler. My mother was one of three children, the only girl and two brothers.

Q: All right. Did you grow up in Bronxville as a kid? I mean was this —

KELLY: No. We moved a short distance away to New Rochelle. I think there was even a year in between in Pelham. But I went to grammar school in New Rochelle, then to junior high school, and then to the high school. But from the high school, which was large, I transferred to a small private boarding school in Greenwich, Connecticut, as a scholarship student. Something that my parents were eager to have me do because I was showing some promise as an artist, and also that kind of school, which was unusual in the '30s was coeducational,, although there were some day students. And it was based on the philosophy of Dewey, the great educator.

Q: Oh yes, John Dewey from Columbia.

KELLY: Yes. So- called the Progressive school idea.

Q: Yeah. Well, first place growing up in New Rochelle, what was it like for a kid?

KELLY: They had fraternities in high school and it had a waterfront.

Q: I want to go back before that.

KELLY: Before that it was —

Q: Elementary school kind of.

KELLY: Yes. I remember one of my teachers who said — I'm trying to think of her name—Ah, Miss Gallop. I remember her commanding; “Giles, march your boots up here.”

Q: (laughs)

KELLY: I lived near the railroad tracks in a very modest house, but on the right side of the railroad tracks. And we used to go into New York on the Boston and Westchester Railway line, which was reduced to be the B&W line, and then to the Bump and Wiggle line.

Q: (laughs)

KELLY: And there was that song, “45 Minutes From Broadway.” Which was about the time it took us to get to Grand Central

Q: Oh yes, that was Cohan, wasn't it? George M. Cohan?

KELLY: Yes.

Q: “45 Minutes From Broadway.”

KELLY: Yes.

Q: Think of the difference it makes.

KELLY: (laughs) Anyway, we lived by those railroad tracks. They were out back. including the New York and New Haven and Hartford line. So I used to love the trains. I had a nice neighborhood. There was a girl in the next house whom I was learning about girls from.

Q: Uh-huh.

KELLY: And a guy across the street was a bully. And we used to have a lot fun in a sand lot which served as a playground for us. And we made roads and bridges and tunnels there.

Q: Were you much of a reader?

KELLY: A reader. No. That doesn't mean I didn't read, but I —

Q: No, no, no.

KELLY: I was not into books.

Q: Well, what about your artistic stuff? Did that come out early?

KELLY: Yes.

Q: I mean were you doing sketches?

KELLY: Yes.

Q: Cartoons, or what?

KELLY: I still have drawings that go back to those days of junior high school and maybe even further back. Yes, I was always interested in drawing and did a lot of drawing all my life.

Q: Was this sort of innate or were you getting any sort of instruction or school or not? I mean before you went away to school.

KELLY: Not any special instruction, just regular art classes that everybody took.

Q: First place, where did your family fall politically?

KELLY: My father was a Republican and my mother a Democrat.

Q: (laughs) So often the case.

KELLY: I heard many debates as I was growing up.

Q: How did Roosevelt play? Because Roosevelt were for him or again' ?

KELLY: Yes. My mother was very much for him. I think my father was not strongly against him, but he certainly didn't think he was the right man for the job.

Q: I was thinking of that cartoon, "Let's go down to the Trans Lux and hiss at President Roosevelt."

KELLY: Right.

Q: In The New Yorker. Well, what about —

KELLY: By the way, The New Yorker was something that I grew up with. My parents, especially my mother, read it. She was quite a liberal. And one of the nice things when I got to this school in Connecticut called the Edgewood School, one of my classmates was the daughter of Ray Irvin. Ray Irvin was the art director of The New Yorker. He designed the original "Tilley" cover.

Q: Yeah, I always think of Peter Arno. The New Yorker had wonderful cartoonists.

How about religion? Was this important for your family?

KELLY: Religion was not important, but it was something that was part of our culture. I think my parents wanted me to go to different Sunday schools, different churches. And I went to Christian Science, Episcopal, probably some others that I can't really remember. But I throughout my life wanted to be familiar with the Jewish faith. When I was in Khartoum I served as a Sidesman in the Church of England. But I have never been a church person. I was only a Sidesman there to further my professional connections.

Q: Yeah. Anyway, what was the name of this boarding school?

KELLY: It was called The Edgewood School.

Q: Edgewood School.

KELLY: And it was on a lovely campus that had once been the Post Estate in Greenwich, Connecticut. It's no longer there.

Q: Well, what was school like there?

KELLY: It had small classes, 12, 15 in a class maybe, boys and girls. And they had interesting facilities such as a printing press, carpenter shop, and a Miss Bentley that gave special exercises. She came once a week, or month or something. We put on plays, Shakespeare, Gilbert and Sullivan. There was also a studio for pottery. We played football and we had ice hockey. We had inter-school hockey and football in which I participated. I lived in the boys dorm, which was a bit of a walk to the main house and school building. It was an open dorm, not rooms. And we had fairly rigid requirements to keep our stuff neat, tidy and clean. I gave haircuts to some of the boys in order to earn a quarter or a nickel or whatever it was in those days. We didn't go into town much. We liked the campus. My parents could drive up from New Rochelle, probably a three-quarter-hour drive in those days.

The first time I was seriously interested in a girl was at Edgewood School. Althea was an interesting person from Chicago who I was intrigued with. She was fey, you might say. One crisis at the school and for me too, was after one Christmas vacation she didn't return to school as expected. I, as a scholarship student, worked on the switchboard. So I heard the principal talking with her parents and saying where is she? And they said we took her to the station to catch her train. And it became a cause celebe in Chicago. Where was this girl? She came from a prominent and wealthy family there. So there was a mystery for about a week or 10 days until she was found in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in a car with three guys who she had met at a New Years Eve party —

Q: (laughs)

KELLY: — and they were heading “South of the Border.” Do you remember that tune?

Q: Oh yes, yes, yes.

KELLY: They were going south of the border and to Hollywood. When she got back to school she swore to me that she hadn't slept with any of these guys. I was crestfallen, but still in love with her.

Q: I mean the Depression was in its full swing during this time you were in the school, weren't you?

KELLY: Depression. Yes. My father was out of work, my mother was doing some secretarial work for a well known scientist in New York. I'm trying to think of his name now. Harold, Harold —

Q: Well, it'll come.

KELLY: So she was the breadwinner at times, and my dad was looking for jobs and got one occasionally, sometimes it was installing a sound system in a theaters or public address systems on ships. It was pick-up work. He worked for a time for Western Electric, which was a big company.

Q: How did the outside world — I'm trying to figure out, you were at the school what years?

KELLY: Well, I, I graduated from high school in '39.

Q: So did the outside world events, I mean Hitler and Mussolini and all that, did that intrude — I mean was that very apparent to you or was that far away?

KELLY: It seemed far away. But interesting. War was in the news a good deal. I was aware of it, but thinking it was not going to bother me—it was way over there.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: And I had a very good friends, interesting friends, at Edgewood because only interesting people would go -

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: —to a place like that. I was doing art. That's why I was there, because I was good at art. But I want to go back to one thing. In high school, New Rochelle High School, when Amelia Earhart was lost in her flight around the world, I was very interested in that. And I wrote a piece, an article, for a contest that was held at the high school, and I won. It was about her last flight— it was called I think “Pennies From Heaven,” But it was a make-up story of what happened after she left the airport and flew across the Pacific.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: It was sort of a dreamlike thing.

Q: It was specific.

KELLY: Yes. But that prize I think also helped me get a scholarship to Edgewood.

Q: Well, did you get any feel — I mean I'm trying to pick up sociological things. I assume that there were no, now they call them African-Americans — at the time we called them colored or black — in your orbit at all.

KELLY: No, they were at New Rochelle High School, but not the Edgewood School. And I did not really have much chance to know them or be particularly interested in them.

Q: What about Jews? You know, there was quite a bit of prejudice against Jews, but being in an artist-type school I think it would be, you know, a considerable Jewish element there. How did that play in your view?

KELLY: There was a Jewish presence, a good Jewish presence at Edgewood School, more so than at the New Rochelle High School. And I was friends with and attracted to Jewish people. In fact, my best friend at Edgewood was a Jew. There were also, interestingly enough, even a communist on the faculty and a socialist.

Q: Well, at that time, I mean there were — we had the New Deal and then the communists were a real presence at the time, labor movements and all this. Did you find, I won't say attracted, but were you aware of labor, of struggles in the period, or?

KELLY: Yes. Not involved, but aware. One of the things, Stu, if I may go on a bit here was that there was a sort of laissez-faire attitude at this school, being progressive, with a lot of permissiveness, and self-expression— all that sort of thing. And by the time I graduated I felt it was too much. One of the things that my family was dealing with was the depression,. What about college? Where would we get the money? And where would Giles like to go?

Well, two things. I had become very interested in boats. My father was interested in boats. I got jobs in the summertime in New Rochelle being a launch driver for one of the yacht clubs. I was also hired to be caretaker and skipper on a very large sailboat with no motor. That was a big deal in those days for me to handle. So I was thinking of being a sailor. I had this vision of maybe being an officer on a cruise ship running down to South America. I'd have a nice white uniform and all the girls would like that. Also, since I was a citizen of New York State, going to the Merchant Marine academy would be cheap. So that's where I went. There was one other influence: I was sort of fed up with the laissez-faire life I wanted things to be more orderly.

Q: Well, you know, when you look at it the '30s there was a lot of experimenting around like the Dewey thing. I went to schools in — I was —I was in junior high in California and I remember they didn't allow homework. I mean this was one of the, you know, trying to make school more interesting, something like — there was a lot of you might say

foolishness, but trying various things. Did you ever read the book Auntie Mame or see the play?

KELLY: Yes.

Q: Because there was this thing where a young boy who there was sent to a progressive school and he's yanked out because when he's found all the little kids are out there waving their arms around calling "spreading the sperm," you know (laughs)?

KELLY: (laughs)

Q: Anyway, it's of that era. OK, you were at the — what's the name of the — Kings —

KELLY: No, New York State Maritime Academy Sometimes known as the Merchant Marine Academy.

Q: Academy.

KELLY: And it was federally and state funded.

Q: A little bit like the military VMI (Virginia Military Institute) here in Virginia. You end up in the U.S. Military but its state run.

KELLY: Yes

Q: Well, talk about — you were there from when to when?

KELLY: 1940 to 1942.

Q: Well, this is of course a red-hot period. When you went in we were at peace. How did the academy strike you? What were you doing?

KELLY: It was located in the Bronx in a fort and we wore uniforms of course, and we took naval courses, as well as merchant marine courses. We had a summer cruise each year. I was seen as not the regular type guy there. I was still pining for my intellectual and artistic friends at Edgewood School, and what I was finding were people from not only New York, but other states, most of whom were sort of rough diamonds, you might say.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: So I didn't fit in too well.

Q: Well, the Merchant Marines is a different breed of cat. I can speak of this as being a consular officer and having to deal with it from time to time.

KELLY: Uh-huh.

Q: Well, how'd you do in the studies?

KELLY: I did fairly well in the studies, not outstanding— wasn't the top of the class, but probably in the upper-middle part. I had a bit of a knack, on anything that had to do with seamanship. I did struggle with navigation though. And I didn't have any problem with the Military. There was the usual humiliation of plebes. We call them “mugs” there. And that is something you had to navigate very carefully in dealing with the faculty and the upper class. It was important among fellow students to be one of the guys.

Q: Well, was there sort of developed the same spirit that you got out of West Point Annapolis as far as class spirit and keeping in touch and all that, or not, or?

KELLY: I don't think it was nearly as cultivated or spontaneous there as it is in those other academies. We were homogenous as a class vis-#-vie the other classes, so there was class spirit. But the school is a very old maritime school, the oldest in America. And so we were sort of led to believe that we were very special if we were going to be Merchant

Marine officers and some of the best alumni have become famous captains or even naval admirals.

Q: You were there when the draft started and wartime preparation. How did that affect you all?

KELLY: I was not subject to the draft because I was a naval reserve cadet and midshipman. And I was there when we were attacked in some place called “Pearl Harbor,” which we all thought was probably in the Philippines. We didn't quite know where the hell Pearl Harbor was. But that changed everything of course. And we knew that the very day it happened. It meant — well, let me put it this way. Even Before Pearl Harbor due to war in Europe we did not cruise as was customary to Europe on our summer cruises. In 1941 the cruise was only as far east as Bermuda then down to the Caribbean. But the next year — gee, we just went down the Atlantic Coast and saw some sunken tankers and hoped we weren't next. But when December of 1941 happened it changed the pace, it changed the attitude

Q: Well, right after Pearl Harbor Hitler declared war on us. We were having what was called for German U-boat commanders the “happy time” or something. They were sinking ships off our coast. We hadn't even blacked out, we didn't go for convoys. For Merchant Mariners this must have been a traumatic period. What information were you getting?

KELLY: It was. However, there were very few of us out of a class of maybe 40 that went into the Navy. So to answer your questions, most graduates didn't seem to be inhibited from going to sea in the Merchant Marine.

Q: But weren't you get reports about the tremendous — I mean it was a horrible period, tremendous loss of ships —

KELLY: Yes.

Q: — by German —

KELLY: As I say, as we went on a training ship down to Norfolk we saw wrecks, and of course heard about them, and wondered if we were going to get blown up. Yes, it was very evident. But I did not feel — nor do I think many of the students wanted to quit going to sea.

Q: No, no, I'm just saying that this had to have been probably for the Merchant Marine a most traumatic period. All right, well —

KELLY: Let me add this point that the people in the Merchant Marine were getting well paid and people like myself that went into the Navy were getting poorly paid in comparison.

Q: Well, what was the situation? Could you opt for the Navy or how did this work?

KELLY: If you had passed the naval courses that were part of the curriculum and applied for a commission and for active duty, that was the route into the Navy. A lot of guys didn't want to do that, they wanted to go to sea, make money, and have a Merchant Marine career. I had turned away from it largely because I felt that the people that were in the Merchant Marine that I met in the academy and elsewhere professionally, were not the kind of people I particularly enjoyed. In fact, in the yearbook of my class they said — they predicted that Giles would become captain of Mrs. Astor's yacht (laughs). So you know how I was seen.

Q: Yeah (laughs).

KELLY: (laughs) Little did they know that in fact I would be captain of the presidential yacht.

Q: (laughs) So how did this transition to the Navy work?

KELLY: Well, on graduation I had applied for a commission and active duty, which I got but it took time. At that time my father was back in the Navy on active duty. He first went back as a lieutenant commander, then a commander, and later became a captain. I had to wait an uncomfortable time after graduation before all the papers came through. I caught up with my father in Seattle and he swore me in, which was nice. We got a picture of the two of us and I went off to sea.

Q: Well, let's talk about your sea duty. What did you do and where'd you go?

KELLY: Well, the Navy knew I trained as a Merchant Marine officer. They have a special designation for officers that come in to the Navy through the Merchant Marine Academy. My designation indicated that I should be on some kind of a cargo ship or passenger ship, and I was indeed assigned to a naval cargo ship. It was one of the converted Liberty ships. My orders read to proceed from Seattle to San Francisco and join the USS Carina, a new ship that was getting ready to sail and being loaded. I got there before the captain and waited around. I was not living on board the ship, but in quarters that were provided. Other officers arrived. I was junior, at bottom of the list, I guess. Anyway, we trained and took courses and finally took the ship to sea. She was loaded with aviation gas and ammunition.

Q: What was the name of the ship?

KELLY: The Carina, named after a star. She was an AK — AK was the Navy designation for cargo ships. I've forgotten the number, AK-74 it was '42. I remember we passed Christmas Island on Christmas Day, which was sort of nice. We were on our way to Guadalcanal to bring fuel and ammunition to the troops there.

Q: Oh.

KELLY: And we traveled alone, no escort. We had a celebration on crossing the equator, in the Naval tradition. We operated in a serious naval way, nothing like “Mr. Roberts.” It

was reasonable spit and polish. We did stop at the island of Tonga, and that was exotic and fascinating. The natives lived in straw huts and I ate my first breadfruit there, things they pull out of the ground like yams.

Q: I know what you mean.

KELLY: And I met a girl there, which was nice. She wanted me to stay and be her boyfriend. She even took me to meet her family and we had sat on the floor and had a meal together.

KELLY: After I had to go back, she came to the ship with a little puppy as a present. And the captain allowed me to have it on board as the ship's mascot. We called the puppy Tonga.

Q: Well, you had a really involved cargo, didn't you?

KELLY: Very.

Q: Was that nervous making?

KELLY: Yes. I was nervous. I was a coding officer and a communications officer. My cabin was by the bridge. The captain was on one side and I was on the other side. I got all the messages in code and had to unscramble them. And every night I wondered if we were going to get blown up so I slept in my clothes. Yeah, I was apprehensive.

Q: Did you sort of have to anchor at some distance from other ships when you went to Tonga and other places?

KELLY: No. We went immediately to Guadalcanal. And there's no harbor there; it's just a beach. So we stood off the beach and unloaded into our own ship's boats and on to floating docks brought out from the beach.

Q: What was happening at Guadalcanal when you were there? I mean had the —

KELLY: The Jap ships were coming down the “slot” at night.

Q: Still coming down?

KELLY: Oh yes. And there were the air attacks. We usually left the beach and went to a harbor at nearby Florida Island- surrounded by hills, hoping that we would be hard to find because of the hills. We would retire each night and then go back next day. But on one night we were called to general quarters at I guess about 11:00. We soon heard on the radio that bogies are approaching on our starboard side. We were all in our life jackets, with helmet on. My position was on the bridges that time as a communications officer.

And I heard — this is a little side story here of mine —When I heard that the attacking bogies, were coming in on the starboard side, I was on the starboard side of my ship, so I decided I'd go to the port side. Of course everything is pitch dark, all lights out, and everybody tense and quiet. I started to cross the bridge in a hurry, head down, earphones on. I must have got halfway across the bridge when there was a tremendous explosion and I fell back on deck. Then silence. A moment later I heard the captain's voice, “Who the hell was that?” Apparently, the captain was rushing to the starboard side as I was going to port side both with our heads down and we crashed into each other (smacks hands together), our two helmets hit together— sounded just like an explosion. And we were knocked to the floor. So he said, “Kelly, if you ever get in my way on this bridge again you're going to be keel hauled.

Q: Brig or?

KELLY: Something like that.

Q: Well, was there any particular attack at that time? You know, to my mind the whole Guadalcanal experience is probably is well — not many people are familiar with it. But you

know, it was a fantastic air, land and sea war where the two empires, the American and the Japanese could hardly get at each other, but except at this one particular point.

KELLY: We were not of course a fighting ship.

Q: No, no.

KELLY: We were more like a target ship. If they could it would help them isolate our fighters on islands and they could stop our creeping back up north. So they would bring down cruisers and aircraft carriers. To this front line. The Japs were heading for Australia, we were heading for the Philippines, then to their homeland. So they ran down the slot, with a group of ships. at night, shooting up everything they could find, including us. We had fighting ships, battle ships, and other war ships, to protect us. So while we were there important naval engagements were going on around us. We listened in on our military circuits. We also heard Tokyo Rose tell how we were being sunk. When we had unloaded, we were not sent back to the United States which we had all thought would happen. But, oh no, “you go down to an island further south, to Noumea, and load supplies.” So we were doing a shuttle service for a while just back of the front lines. And occasionally we would run into danger. We always zigzagged in those waters because we were afraid of subs. And we were escorted occasionally by a destroyer, sometimes one of the old destroyers from World War I.

Q: Four-stacker.

KELLY: Yeah, a four-stacker. And for me there was one unforgettable occasion. As we were zigzagging with this destroyer at noon it was the time to change course. I was on the bridge and ordered a course change to the right. Everything — clear skies, everything was fine. I was thinking of submarines. And just as we turned a string of bombs went off right down the track we had just left. I looked up and there was a “Betty,” as we called the Jap bomber. Of course we went to our battle stations and we fired off our five-inch anti-aircraft gun. The destroyer didn't do anything. The Betty turned and left, — I guess he'd run out of

bombs. And so message from my annoyed captain to the captain of the destroyer saying, “How come you didn't open fire?”

The other captain came back with “Because we don't have any anti-aircraft guns.”

Q: Oh God.

KELLY: But we did get damaged by a near bomb hit one night. It threw the shaft out of alignment and damaged the bearings. We couldn't go our regular speed. So we were sent down to Australia to go into dry dock and get fixed. And of course we loved going to Australia and Sidney, seeing the girls.

Q: Oh yeah. Well, this almost been a favorite part.

KELLY: Oh, it was—it was. For many reasons. First, we felt safe the first time since December. Second, there were women.

Q: Well, how did it continue until — after you left Australia what happened?

KELLY: We went to a number of new places. We went to Norfolk Island, which is between New Zealand and Australia. I was the only officer on the ship that went ashore, because again, as communications officer some secret stuff had to be taken ashore. You know, that was where some of the mutiny on the Bounty people fled to. I made a sketch of the landing area. I sketched a lot during the war and still have drawings. As we couldn't have cameras, I would sketch. We stayed in New Zealand for quite a while and I got know quite a few people there and had a wonderful visit. I can't remember quite where we went next. I think it was to Ulithi Island. We were delivering cargo for troops again, but not the high test gas and explosives so much as mail and all kind of stuff. After I'd been there a year — I guess a year and a half — I was ordered home for leave and to a newly constructed ship. The best way for me was by ship. We had some choices, to fly or to go by ship. I sailed from Sydney aboard the U.S.S. West Point, which was the former SS America.

Q: America, yeah.

KELLY: So I offered to be a bridge watch stander. So that was a good trip home, a fast trip and I could take more luggage than I could have on a plane. My next ship was fitting out at the Willamette Shipyard in Portland, Oregon. I had to wait quite a while for her to be finished for going to sea and so I had a nice time getting familiar with Portland and dating American women. And we put that ship, an attack transport, in commission. She was a faster ship, and operated frequently with other of ships of her class.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KELLY: — as an attack group. That captain was an old mustang, that is somebody that came up “through the hawsepipe.” That is to say, he was a former enlisted man. And was born and bred in the navy. I'd had some wonderful captains on the other ship, two of them, but not this time. I became a lieutenant junior grade and now I had a little seniority over ensigns on the ship. But I felt this captain sort of had it in for me. It was the same kind of thing that I found in the Merchant Marine Academy. He was rough and tough.

Q: Uh-huh.

KELLY: But I had experience, both Merchant Marine experience and now naval — a year and a half of naval experience — more than most of the other junior officers. So I had a leg up, you might say. During our shakedown cruise, which was off San Diego, an airplane went down, and all ships were alerted but we were the nearest ship. So we were to make a rescue. That meant we had to put a boat in the water to pick up survivors and the debris. I was the officer sent to make the rescue. It worked out well. We saved two guys and the admiral gave us “a well done”

Q: Well, then how did your naval career end?

KELLY: Before it ended it was quite a few engagements.

Q: Well, why don't we talk about them? I'd like to —

KELLY: Well we operated now with other attack transports —and guarded by — accompanied by destroyers and sometimes baby flattops.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: We were part of a task group and we were participated in the Philippines and Okinawa landings.

Q: Were you involved in the Leyte operation?

KELLY: Yes. Yes. And in the Lingayen Gulf Operation. There were two PhilippineOps, one on the East Coast and one on the West Coast.

Q: What about Leyte? This is when, you know, the —

KELLY: That's when General MacArthur went ashore saying “I have returned.”

Q: Well, I was thinking more of the big battle, you know, and the —

KELLY: Big battle. We were not there, but I've read about it recently. Glad we missed it.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: I knew nothing about it at the time. It is fascinating to get the big picture now because we were getting only the small picture, at the time. You know, turn right, turn left to arrive at the certain point at a certain time and discharge. I did get ashore in Okinawa during the battle. I did it too in the Philippines, to talk with soldiers and make some sketches. Nice to get some mud on my feet after being on a ship all the time. It was interesting. I did a whole series of letters home that were kept, probably well over 100. Recently I've edited those letters and put them into a book for my grandchildren. Not

anything published — just bound and edited. We learned Roosevelt died. Some of us were sad and a lot of — most of us were sad, but a couple of officers said, “Glad he's gone.”. When the Japanese gave up we learned about it while we were at sea and there was huge applause and yelling. That was a very big day. Our ship was then not an attack ship, but just a transporter. We were sent to Japan to pick up materials to take to China were going to help the Chinese Nationalist fight the Chinese communists.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KELLY: So excess war materials were loaded on our ship to be taken up the Yellow Sea to Taku Bar, which is the closest you could get to Beijing in those days. We unloaded materials there. Also we stopped at another place called Tsingtao and there we were among the first Americans to arrive. There were still Japanese military there. I had an interesting time there. I don't know whether I want to bother telling you a little war story.

Q: Sure, as long as we're going this way, why don't we tell it?

KELLY: All right. We were the only ship in the harbor at the time. And we were going to unload. I was at this point the executive officer on the ship, second in command. So I took the ship's Jeep, and a Chinese speaking enlisted man with me and two of my officers that I liked. We went off on a little tour of Tsingtao, which was an old resort town, where they also make beer. You can get Tsingtao beer here today.

Q: It used to be a German enclave.

KELLY: It was. Very good! That's your history coming out. We drove out along the sea front and where the nice houses were. I pulled up to one that had a circular driveway. And I don't know why I stopped there, but a man came out, a white man, perhaps a Russian Jew. And he was clapping and waving and saying, “Come on in, come on in.” And so we did — the four of us. He took us in a side door and explained most of his house had been turn into a cigarette factory by the Japanese occupiers. So he was reduced to two rooms.

He introduced his very attractive Russian wife, a white Russian. I was always interested in beautiful woman, particularly in those days. He served us some liquor and began to complain about the Japanese officer who was living at the other end the house without his permission.

Emboldened by the drink, I said, “Well, we'll put an end to that right now.” So I marched down the hall with my MP (Military Police) badge showing and my revolver handy. With my cohorts and knocked on the door and gathered nobody was there. So we opened the door, one way or another, I've forgotten how. We entered. I noticed a lot of Japanese occupation money on the guy's desk. My cohorts decided they would take some souvenirs, back to the ship. I didn't do that, but took a handful of occupation money, for a souvenir. I then left a signed note demanding that the occupant leave within 24 hours. On the way back to the ship I noticed a small store that was selling silverware and stuff like that. I stopped and went in and noticed a set of six silver Chinese cups that would be good for sherry or something. The owner was happy to be paid with the occupation bills, which were about to become worthless.

I had promised the owner that I would come back the next day to make sure that the Japanese guy had left. So when I drove up the next day in my Jeep there was another Jeep there with two Marines in it. They asked “Sir are you the Lt. Kelly that was here yesterday?”

And I said, “Yes. What's the problem?

“Well, sir the, the Marine Provost Marshall who's taking charge of security here wants to see you, he has had a complaint of a robbery at this establishment and he wanted to talk with you about it.”

I said, “It wouldn't be convenient for me to talk about it right now, but I will see him a little later.” The Marines saluted smartly and drove off. I then went back to the ship, called the guys that had been with me the day before. I said, “Look, I've got to see the Marine

Provost and it's going to be my word against the Japanese word. I want you to get rid of everything that you took yesterday, over the side."

So then I went to see the Provost. He was a stern guy and senior to me by a couple of ranks. I denied theft and he ended up giving me a kind of a letter, which I was to take to my captain for "appropriate action." So when I took it to the captain — this was now not the captain I disliked, but a new captain who I did like — and I handed it to him. And he read it and said, "Giles, why didn't you tell me you were going, I would have liked to meet these people." And he tore the letter up and threw it away. That was the end of it; except that years later, I think The Saturday Evening Post or one of these magazines, had an article about difficulties of occupation. And there was the story about how some un-named naval officer had done just what I'd done.

I was soon thinking of getting out of the Navy. The war was over. And I was looking for something interesting to do. When we docked at Shanghai, another officer and I were thinking about business — what about an export-import business? Maybe get out of the Navy and get into business. So we talked with Chinese, or expatriates that might be useful contacts in the future.

Meanwhile, the captain I liked was transferred and a four striper replaced him. We hadn't had a four striper on board.

Q: Full captain now?

KELLY: Yes, a four striper, Naval Academy graduate. Came aboard. He had never been captain of a big ship before. He had commanded a flotilla landing craft. He didn't know what to do, which was a surprise to me. By that time I had advanced to Lieutenant Commander and knew how to run the ship. The new captain relied on me to show him the ropes. He was friendly, but I noticed he drank, which was a real no-no. I'd never been up against that before. He would do stupid things like call all officers together at midnight in his cabin and would be obviously drunk. He would talk about how we weren't 100% with

him, we weren't behind him, and we were bad guys; he was a good guy. So the doctor didn't want to sail under this man. When we got back to Hawaii we tried to get him fired. We went to see the admiral. But the Navy sticks up for its senior officers and we were just reservists. We were told we didn't have enough proof. My God, what proof could we get? I put in for release from active duty. I got transfer orders when we got back to the States. But I didn't leave the Navy.

Q: (laughs) Yeah.

KELLY: I had leave and got an appointment to a ship on the East Coast. On leave I met the woman who was to be my wife. She was a Smith College graduate and had been a camp counselor, and she was passing through Ipswich, Massachusetts where my family lived. I thought she was really interesting. But she was going to teach at the Putney School in Vermont You know Putney?

Q: Oh yeah.

KELLY: And I had orders as navigator for a large ship going to the Caribbean. The ship was temporarily in Bayonne, New Jersey where I was supposed to meet her. But that girl I liked lived in New Jersey. It was late summertime and I hoped when I got to my new ship maybe I could meet up with her again, which I did. I sailed with the ship but by the time we reached Norfolk I got my separation orders. I went back to my family in Ipswich. And it is another story how I got into Williams.

Q: Well, we'll pick this up the next time. It'll be 1946 and you've separated from the active Navy but you remained in the reserve, didn't you?

KELLY: Yes, I stayed in the Ready Reserve.

Q: And we'll pick it up there.

Today is the 17th of December, 2010 with Giles Kelly. Giles, we're 1946 and we were just talking about having applied to Williams. Here you are, how old are you?

KELLY: 25.

Q: 25. You've already had your degree, didn't you?

KELLY: Oh no. One thing I had learned from my shipmates was I needed one. Most of my fellow officers were college men. During those four years learned I needed to go to a liberal arts college.

Q: What'd you get from the Merchant Academy?

KELLY: I got a coast guard certificate making me eligible to be a second mate on any ship, on any ocean, and probably a graduation certificate,. I've forgotten. But the main thing was I got that Coast Guard certificate. That's what the school was all about.

Q: So you really felt you needed it, in order to get on in the world, a college diploma. Was that —

KELLY: I realized how much I was missing out and how much I needed to go to college.

Q: Yeah, mm-hmm. All right. Well, could you describe Williams in 1946?

KELLY: Did I tell you how I got into Williams?

Q: You told me that you came and they gave you a quick test and —

KELLY: OK, then you know I got in sort of by luck.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: Serendipity sort of thing. At that time Williams was male only. And I was one of the many veterans there. They had veteran housing, left over from the war years.

Q: Yeah, I think there'd been an ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) unit or something.

KELLY: Since I was old enough, 25, to be sometimes mistaken for a young instructor I didn't feel I fitted into the fraternity scene, so I joined the Garfield Club, which was an eating club. I lived in one of the dormitories during my first year as a freshman. And I had to take courses that summer to make it into the sophomore class because I only got one semester credit for my Merchant Marine Academy education. I don't know what to tell you particularly about Williams at that time except it seemed isolated, but very beautiful.

Q: Did any professor or any subjects particularly attract you during the four years you were there?

KELLY: Yes. I had decided that it was important to study economics and political science. So I took the Political- Economy major But I was also interested in art and music. I don't know of any other special interest at that time,

Q: Was Schuman one of your professors?

KELLY: Yes, Frederick Schuman.

Q: He was sort of a towering figure in the college-

KELLY: Towering indeed. And there was a man who taught labor relations who liked — tall and white haired — Robert Brooks.

Q: Were you there when the McCarthy thing hit and Schuman was one of the people named by Joseph McCarthy as a commie or something like that?

KELLY: No, I wasn't aware of that. I was in London then. But I was pleased to be in academia. On weekends the Williams guys took off for Bennington and Smith and other places to meet women

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: And I did that sort of thing, started thinking it'd be nice to have a girlfriend somewhere. I found out that that woman I liked was teaching at Putney. Do you know Putney?

Q: Oh yes.

KELLY: So I looked her up in Vermont. And I migrated up there every once in a while.

Q: They had a school there.

KELLY: Putney School, and I saw her there. I went there on the weekends for some square dances and romance. We dated and decided to get married. So after my first year at Williams we lived in the veterans' housing. She had majored in theater and was very popular on campus because there were never enough women around, especially for the theater. She became an honorary member of Cap and Bells.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: I found that a bit distracting because I was hitting the books and she was up there at the theater having a great time with the guys. They had late parties and, you know, the camaraderie that comes with putting on a play. I was in one Shakespeare play with her, but not very happily. We had a lot of fun with the other married couples. I managed the Garfield Club, which brought in a little more income beside the stipend that the government provided vets at that time.

I graduated in '49 and was about to have a baby. I got into Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School on faculty recommendations. We had to find our own “digs” there because there wasn't any veterans' housing available. We lived off campus in something that was called Pigalee. Actually it was a little pig house that was made over to for use of young students. We spent six months there before we got veterans housing on campus. Two of our four children were born in Princeton

Q: What were you still interested in political economy?

KELLY: Yes.

Q: This was just about the preeminent school for international affairs at the time, wasn't it?

KELLY: The Master of Public Affairs degree was new. The first class was ''49 and I was in the class of '51 which had 15 members. We had seminars rather than big lectures. There were people like myself, veterans who had been to war, ex majors and lieutenant commanders. Our class melded together rather nicely. We again lived in government provided student housing with a stipend.

Q: Were you looking at any particular area of the world? I mean the Korean War was going on. Were you being caught up in the Korean War?

KELLY: Not in the slightest. I was keeping up with my reserve training annually, or took correspondence courses, because I wanted to earn points towards military retirement. But I saw my training as a sort of paid holiday for two weeks a year The travel was interesting, and being an officer life was good. Aside from that I was thinking of what to do after graduation. I hoped to go into the government and contribute whatever I could to stopping war and making the world a better place—that sort of thing. Like so many people at that age, I had stars in my eyes and lots of ambition and hope for doing something significant.

Q: So by the way, at Princeton did any professors particularly strike you or influence you?

KELLY: One, Professor Marvin Bernstein, I particularly admired, but I did not became close to any one professor.

Q: Well now, again, trying to figure out how to tread, but I remember when I was at Williams in 1950 I think four of my classmates ended up being recruited by the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). I filled out one form, a huge form, for them and then I got caught up in the Korean War and ended up in the Air Force.

KELLY: Were you drafted?

Q: No, I enlisted with the idea of becoming an officer but ended up spending four years enlisted. I was kind of having fun. I was a language specialist. I'd gone to the Army Language School. So at one point I was off North Korea, where they just had that shooting stuff. We were listening to Soviet Air Force. But I was also in Japan, Korea, and Germany.

KELLY: Did you get any good stuff listening?

Q: Yes. Because actually in Korea we were — one of these things — it's known but it's sort of forgotten that we were actually — the U.S. Air Force was fighting the Soviet Air Force. I mean it was — there were Soviet pilots and Soviet planes directed by Soviet ground controllers and so we would listen and then if we would hear a flight of MIGs we would call up the fighter control and say they're sending some MIGs up. And I just remember one time we were shooting down the planes, practically 10 to one. I think MIGs were a good but the Saber could take a lot more and our pilots were more experienced. I remember listening one time to the ground controller saying "attack the sabers." And the pilot said, "Fuck your mother," (laughs). That was the highlight of my military career.

KELLY: (laughs) I love that. They're human too.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Anyway, but this was a period when there was a lot of attacks by McCarthy, but I think at the same time everybody was feeling very patriotic and wanted

to serve their country, well not everybody, but certainly that was the spirit I think at the Ivy League colleges.

KELLY: I had another baby coming along when I got my degree, my third child. And I was very concerned about earning a living. I'd done my war and I wasn't thinking much about the Korean problem. When I had graduated I looked around Washington for a job that would at least give me pay equivalent to what I had made as a lieutenant commander. That was my benchmark. And the best deal was with the CIA because they didn't seem to be bound by the personnel system.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: So I went with the CIA not knowing what was there for me, what they would want me to do. I found it was a very informal attractive collection of people, many from the Ivy League and well heeled.

Q: It was, as they used to say, it was very much a white shoe place. I mean this was — people went to college used to wear white buck shoes. But I don't — I mean there was a very aggressive campaign by the CIA and Williams. I'm sure this is duplicated in all the other Ivy League. It was somewhat similar to the way the British had worked with their Oxford and Cambridge and all, except we were catching up. So this was the beginning of the organization.

KELLY: Yes. I went in without knowing much about the organization. And at that time it was housed in temporary two-story office buildings that lined the reflecting pool with 12-foot fences around it. I found people who were very compatible and very interesting, both men and women. We were far enough away from downtown Washington so that with no restaurants around most of us brown-bagged our lunches. Often in the summertime with our bare feet in the pool and our brown bag along side, we would have a social lunch.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: — which was very pleasant. The other thing is we were learning trade craft, how to shadow people, how to open locks, communicate, and all the kind of things that you have to know to be an operator. First I heard that I was going to Reykjav#k, Iceland. I also found myself in the operations section, secret operations that is, not so much in intelligence gathering, but in running secret operations. I had some connections in the CIA, not very high, but up there. It was awesome to discover who was there. Some bosses were OSS alumni and a couple of them were, surprisingly, from the theaters in New York. One officer was married to the very glamorous Gertrude Lawrence. I was impressed to work with people who had jumped out of airplanes behind the German lines, and others who were big in show business.

Q: It really was.

KELLY: Oh yes. And then to be learning dirty tricks and the spy craft on top of that, honestly it was exciting. As I look back on it it was one of the most glamorous parts of my life.

Q: How long did you do this?

KELLY: Nine years. When I was new in Washington my third daughter was born. Soon after my assignment was changed to London. I don't know why, but suddenly I was going to London to work on joint operations with British Intelligence. So after my third daughter was born, my family and I sailed “minimum first class” on the SS United States to Southampton, England.

Q: But the United States was the biggest and the fastest at the time.

KELLY: Yes. And incidentally one of my classmates from the Merchant Marine Academy was Staff Captain (executive officer) on board.

Q: Uh-huh.

KELLY: Due to having three children we got a pretty nice suite. I think I made four crossings altogether because we came back on home leave and returned on the SS United States. In London, we were very fortunate. My wife and I each had some connections with Americans and British people there. They steered us toward living in Hampstead, which is a little north of the center of London and on the metro system.

We were very fortunate in renting The Watch House, an ancient building of four stories counting the basement. It was on high ground in Hampstead looking out over the city, but could rarely be seen because of the smoke and fog of those days. With it came a walled garden, a studio, and a greenhouse. It was in a very picturesque part of London — narrow roads. You couldn't get two cars past each other, in places, lots of cobblestones, a quaint little Catholic church nearby, a famous graveyard. I rented the house from a film director named McQuitty. He became a friend. We were in a community of artists and writers and theater people. My wife got to know our neighbors while I was working at the embassy. And again, life seemed glamorous because on the one hand we met people of the art world. On the other hand we came to know British intelligence officers, diplomats, and Foreign Office officials. And, lo and behold, we met another couple that almost mirrored us. They were very important to us. He was a member of Parliament. She was an attractive Scottish wife. And they, like us, had three girls and one boy. He was ex Royal Navy and both of us were in government. They lived nearby us and we had a lot of fun together. Our kids were all more or less same age, and played together. We showed them how to play Kick the Can and they taught us Scottish dancing. They had a boat and we all went sailing on the Solent. Good stuff. At that time there was the problem over the Suez Canal. The British were very angry with our government, but not with us personally.

Q: Yeah, this was 1956.

KELLY: Yes. And I sort of had to defend our government among my British friends. The US was definitely frowned at, at that time.

Q: Well, Eisenhower essentially pulled the plug on the French and the British.

KELLY: Right. But it didn't disturb our liaison.

Q: Well, let me ask you about that, because just prior to this Suez thing one of the things I've heard was that all communications with the British shut down. Did you experience that or not?

KELLY: No not on my circuit. They might have in the front office, so to speak, But the intelligence work and liaison continued in my office.

Q: Well, were you aware of what was — I mean this is — the British and the French had to put together an expeditionary force, which was not easy for them at that time. Were you picking up?

KELLY: Well no, not in the liaison circuit that I was on. We were Cold Warriors dealing with the Cold War and not with the Egyptians. And I don't think I was bothered or cared what was going on in the so-called front office.

Q: Well, then did you find that the aftermath of the Suez crisis, that this put a crimp in your work or not?

KELLY: No, because as I say, we were working on entirely different problems—how we could prevent strategic supplies getting to the Soviet Union; how to counter their efforts to shape public opinion or to recruit young people, or propagandize. I was mostly working with interesting and colorful people. People that had experiences like our former OSS people had.

Q: Did you run across Ian Fleming at all?

KELLY: No.

Q: You know, in a way, particularly during World War II, the British special operations people or just the general intelligence community had put together an awful lot of rather fancy things about deception and all that. And there seem to be a proclivity to enjoy special operations and all that, and I think we picked up some of that. Did you find that there was a certain relish on a part of the British in getting involved in this sort of thing?

KELLY: Yes. They had their department of dirty tricks.

Q: Well, then how long were you in London?

KELLY: From '52 to '57. It was a good for me to be there. I think I was doing well in the CIA. My boss was not very popular with the rest of his crew, but he liked me and I felt that I had a good career ahead.

Q: So what happened?

KELLY: After my five years there it was time to move on. But in Washington I didn't feel my future looked as bright as I had thought earlier. They wanted me to go to Florida to get ready for the operation in Cuba.

Q: Bay of Pigs.

KELLY: The Bay of Pigs. But I didn't want to go to Florida and I didn't speak Spanish and I thought Cuba thing was not my meat. So I, turned it down and felt rather let down in Washington after the high life of London.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: And also I was having the problem that so many of us in the CIA were having, of hiding our true employment. People asked “What do you do?” Well, I work for the State Department, or I work for the Department of Defense, and it's all a lie. I didn't feel comfortable doing it and then getting into the funny situation when friends said, I'll give you

a ride to work and they'd drop me at the State Department where I would be half a mile from my real office. I had to pretend too much. And another thing was when one of my daughters said, “Daddy, why can't I come to your office? Mr. McGee's daughter went to his office but you never invite me to yours.” About then I realize it was not the kind of life that I wanted to continue to live, It was not the real me.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: And I had had enough contact with the Foreign Service in London to realize that that's where I should be. So I applied. I was interviewed, and took an oral exam. I didn't have to take a written exam. I guess they were short of economic officers, so I got through the orals OK.

Q: You remember any of the questions that were asked of you?

KELLY: I remember one that amused me. They said since you've got a naval background, if you had a ship in the Great Lakes and you wanted to take it to Florida how would you do that? So I gave a sequence of waterways and places that I would pass. What they wanted was something off the top of my head that I hadn't prepared for, but knew. I guess to see what kind of a presentation I could give. Anyway, I passed. I came home one night after more interviews at the State Department and said, “Get ready to pack we're going to Sudan.”

“What? Where's Sudan?” After my wife looked it up, she said, “How could you do this to our family with small children? Are you nuts? You are asking too much of us.”

But when I mentioned another family going out there that we knew, that made a difference. It was the family of a Smith grad my wife knew. They were going to Sudan at the same time as we were.

Q: Uh-huh.

KELLY: The father was there as a second secretary. I had known him in the agency where actually he was quite senior to me. And I was first secretary, which seemed a funny irony to me. Anyway, that helped my wife over this hurdle because they too had several children.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KELLY: And so we went by ship to Rome then flew from Rome down to Khartoum on what was then known as the BOAC (the British airline). BOAC we soon learned actually stood for “Better On A Camel.”

Q: (laughs)

KELLY: Anyway, planes flew in and out there in the evenings because the hot air at midday was not good for takeoffs and landings. The air was too thin. We landed there in 1960—

Q: And you were there from 1960 to when?

KELLY: To '64. We stayed at the Grand Hotel first as our quarters were not quite ready. The hotel was right next to the zoo and had big old fans going around and safragies in their jellabiya and head scarves. It seemed right out of Hemingway. We could hear the animal sounds at night and the Blue Nile ran at the edge of the property. I felt I was in a film set.

Q: The kids must have been fascinated.

KELLY: Oh, they thought it was great. My wife still had her doubts. But I must tell you four years later she was in tears on leaving.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: We got into a house enclosed by a wall and had an embassy driver on call for several of us, not exclusively mine. The ambassador was named Moose, M-O-O-S-E.

Q: Old and very much an Arabic hand.

KELLY: James Moose. One of the first things I remember he said when we met was, “Giles, I find it hard to believe these Sudanese are Arabs because they're so nice and so calm.” That was his 1960 evaluation.

Q: The British — I mean the Sudanese Civil Service, were still at that time the top civil service of the British Empire. The Sudanese had a great reputation.

KELLY: It was only about four years after the Sudanese had got independence. It was in '56 when they got theirs, and we were talking in 1960.

I took over as head of the economic and commercial section of the embassy. I didn't know much about my home office as I'd not worked in the State Department for long, and felt quite unfamiliar with it at that point. But there I was in the field working for it. I had to learn the requirements and write the required reports. I loved the new responsibility I had.

Q: I see.

KELLY: I had to deal with the (laughs) with the AID people, (Agency for International Development) who outnumbered us in the embassy. And at the country team meetings, where all the heads of departments met with the ambassador, I found myself sometimes at odds with the AID people. They had lots of money and more people and more projects than I felt was appropriate. I tried to keep an overview of the country, which is as you may know is the largest in Africa. It took a while to get familiar and comfortable in my assignment but I grew critical of AID for trying to do too much. More than Sudan could absorb. Maybe I should leave it at that.

Q: Well, I do want to cover your impressions and what was going on in Sudan.

KELLY: Well, let me put this to you. It was a benevolent dictatorship under General Abboud. The Sudanese had not yet entirely found themselves as a new state. Their biggest problem was over sharing the waters of the Nile for agricultural purposes with Egypt. In the Sudan political parties were not permitted at that time. Our political officers sometimes leaned on me for leads because of my economic and commercial contacts. Sudanese would hardly ever visit a political officer in our embassy, but some felt free to see me about economic and commercial matters. Thus I sometimes picked up information about politics along with economics and commercial matters. I felt pretty happy with my role there. As you know, the political officers often thought they were “top dog” at an embassy. It was nice to come to some meetings with political information they didn't have.

Q: (laughs)

KELLY: The Sudanese were not by nature business people. Therefore a lot of the expatriates in Khartoum were really running the businesses. At the time, the Sudanese were sort of second and third echelon people learning to run the business. The Sudanese were by nature nomads and camel drivers and farmers. But there were exceptions. I became a member of Rotary and got to know as many business people as I could. I also needed to get out of town and put together a little expedition that included my family and a USAID family. We made up a caravan of a truck and two Jeeps (with off-road tires) to explore the western part of the Sudan, places like El-Obeid, Kadugli, Umm Ruwaba, Dilling, El Duiem, and Bara. That trip report for the Department also appeared, (edited) in The New York Times (April 19. 1964). I made a point of flying down (no roads) to Juba and Yei. Juba is the major southern city near the Congo border where the White Nile runs through swamps. It's marshy there. At my time, oil had not yet been discovered in the South. The main industry when I was there was raising tobacco, tea, and coffee. British, Greeks and Italians were running the plantations. Christian missionaries were present.

Most of the agricultural commerce of sorghum and sugar was centered around Khartoum. USAID were introducing and helping the Sudanese to grow wheat. Wheat would have a market in India, which at that time was suffering from food shortages. I became interested in trying to promote it. I did the preparations for a U.S. PL (Public Law) 480 Agreement. The new ambassador, Ambassador Rountree, signed it. The AID mission was still trying to do too much. The Sudanese were always willing to say yes to more chicken farms or such a things as movie equipment, even though they didn't know what to do with it all.

There were no paved roads out of Khartoum at that time, so it seemed much like living on an island. However, there was a primitive railroad system. But a paved road was needed between Port Sudan and Khartoum. We were developing roads in the Sudan. It was so interesting that both the Chinese and the Russians were also present in Khartoum at that time (1964).

At one point there was a incident in my home that I shall not forget: One night my wife woke me and said, “Somebody's in our room.” We then were sleeping on the ground floor and the children were on the second floor. Sure enough, I saw a guy going through our closets. I didn't wear much at night, and I think I must have been near naked when I jumped out of bed with no weapons, but I could make a pretty loud noise. So I shouted and yelled and waved my arms. The thief fled and I followed him. He found the front door locked so he headed upstairs, which was the way he must have come in. But that got me excited because that's where my children slept. I chased him up the stairs still yelling. He went out on a porch and jumped over the railing and disappeared. It was pretty scary.

Q: Oh yes. Well, was the division between the north Islamic side and the southern area which was Animist and Christian? One was black and one was Arabic. This is a pretty pronounced division, isn't it, in Sudan?

KELLY: Yes indeed, it was. And there were practically no Arabs down there. And there was a feeling at the time that they had to bring some of the blacks up as at least tokens

in the government as administrators. That was so that southerners were represented in the administration. There wasn't a strong feeling for rebellion that I was aware of in the early '60s. That was to come later. There were, however, a few rebellious people causing trouble who were locked up, but no widespread movement.

Q: Was there tribal conflict in those days?

KELLY: Not that I knew of.

Q: How stood Islam in those days? I mean was it aggressive or was it just sort of all pervasive, or what? I mean the enforcement of Islamic rules and that sort?

KELLY: Stu, I did not feel that there was any pressure. In Khartoum, of course, we heard calls to prayer, but there was no vigilante, no religious police that I new about.

Q: Because I was a little earlier in Dhahran we had religious police in Khobar and all.

KELLY: None of that. None of that. It all seemed very peaceful and a little backward, but slowly emerging. And as I say, it was a benevolent dictatorship.

Q: Well, how about Nasserism? I know around that time in the souk you would find jokes with Nasserists pictures on them.

KELLY: The only issue with the Egyptians was Egyptian economic pressure. They wanted to control as much commerce as possible. I think Egyptians felt that if there was any kind of a political vacuum created due to the exit of the British, that Sudan would be under their sphere of influence—

Q: Well, you mentioned Lebanese. The Lebanese in so much of Africa are sort of the mercantile —

KELLY: True in the Sudan.

Q: — group, sort of like the in other places the Chinese and the Jews. Were these sort of the economic people?

KELLY: Yes, they were the exporters of Sudan's long staple cotton, which was a major export. But the Sudanese generally were not commercially minded. So the Lebanese had filled in for years. They weren't newcomers; the Lebanese and British simply continued running what they had always been running.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: And they took Sudanese in as understudies and put their name on their door so it looked like a Sudanese operation. There were also businesses in the Sudan run by French, Germans, English and Scots.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KELLY: — Also Italians, mostly doing import and export.

Q: Well, now looking at the Sudan, where did the stuff get — how did it get out of there? Did it go to Port Sudan or —

KELLY: Port Sudan was the major export port— I can't know of anything other than Port Sudan and Egypt.

Q: Was there a railroad going ?

KELLY: There was no railway into Egypt.

Q: Really? I thought when Kitchener came down he'd build a railway all the way down.

KELLY: It wasn't there when I was there.

Q: Well, maybe he didn't.

KELLY: The railroad ran down to - Wadi Halfa—that was the railhead. Then freight went by boat to the Nasser Dam, then by railway to Cairo or Alexandria. I made that kind of trip once to Cairo.

Q: Was the Nasser Dam while you were there —

KELLY: It was being worked on and it was a problem. What could be done about the flooding of Abu Simbel when the dam backs up the Nile? There was the idea of building a cofferdam around it. But in the end they raised up Abu Simbel.

Q: Did you get to mess around in boats on the Nile?

KELLY: Oh yes. For me it was sort of a heaven because of a very active sailing club on the Blue Nile. The club's headquarters were on Lord Kitchener's gun boat, the Melik, which was used at the battle of Omdurman. In fact several gunboats fought there, but the Melik was the only one that was still there. It was on the Blue Nile and became the clubhouse for the Blue Nile Sailing Club. So I owned one of the British sloops made out of sheet metal, not wood because wood would be torn apart by the extreme dryness. From a distance they looked like ordinary wooden boats because they were painted bright colors. I had one; they were all named after animals. Mine was Mongoose. I sailed a good deal and once won the “Ambassador's Cup.” But there was one guy, a Greek, and there were a lot of Greeks in the Sudan, one guy named Magliveras and his wife I could seldom beat.

Q: (laughs) Speaking of Greeks, one of the things I learned, I served in Athens for four years. And I was informed and I saw that the top belly dancers of Egypt came out of Alexandria, but they were Greek. And I was wondering did you have good belly dancing in Khartoum?

KELLY: Yes we had attractive Greeks who came up to Khartoum from Alexandria on business. We partied with them. In fact, we did a lot of partying because when you live on an “island” like Khartoum, you had to make your own entertainment. We partied at the large houses that the Greeks, Lebanese and British owned along the Blue Nile. We did not play on the White Nile because of the Bilharzia worms.

Q: Bilharzia.

KELLY: There was no Bilharzia problem in the Blue Nile. So we could water ski and sail and enjoyed all kinds of water sports there. And that's where the best expatriate homes were.

Q: How did you find the Sudanese officials, because as an economic person you — statistics were your lifeblood and all that. How did you find that?

KELLY: Not very sharp, but pleasant and polite. Things got done on Sudanese timetables, which means slowly. They didn't seem to get enthusiastic about projects. But they moved along slowly and were very pleasant. We had a problem socializing with them because of women. They seemed uncomfortable at parties because we were with our wives. They never brought their wives. We didn't even meet their wives.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: And so socializing was rather limited and stilted.

Q: Mm-hmm. The head of it was —

KELLY: General Abboud.

Q: Abboud. What was your impression of his rule?

KELLY: I've said benevolent. How he dealt with the Sudanese themselves was hard to tell because there was so little public information available except through Sudanese I might meet. I think there was not much complaining about the government. But I did hear of heavy-handed repressions of the Muslim Brotherhood. Some of the university students were objecting to Abboud's rule. But it wasn't serious. Nobody was in the streets, nobody was shooting. There was repression, but — it didn't seem to be inciting rebellion.

Q: Something — again, I'm going back to the time I was there, '58 to '60 and in Saudi Arabia — something that kept being thrown in our face in Saudi Arabia was our relations with Israel. Did that come up much?

KELLY: No, not at all.

Q: It wasn't a cause.

KELLY: It was not a problem that I recall. In the paper—an English paper, there was no sign of it. I didn't read Arabic and there were no radio programs in English. Most everybody of consequence spoke English, thanks to the British. Word of mouth or The Sudan Daily provided us with local news and opinions.

Q: One of the things that I've heard from people who've served farther south in Africa, particularly in Tanzania, other — Nigeria, those places, was sort of the unfortunate hand of the leaders who went through the London School of Economics. You know, they'd be into socialism and all that sort of stuff. I suppose we call it left wing, but did that permeate in the Sudan or they were doing their own thing?

KELLY: Well, you know there was some of that in the Mahdi family, who were religious leaders there down through history.

Q: Religious to the former Mahdi of Omdurman and all that sort of stuff.

KELLY: Right. But the Mahdi leader who I met had been educated in England and the United States. And I think they were waiting for the day that democracy would come to the Sudan, but they were not — as far as I could tell — in combat with the regime. I did know them socially and the Mahdi I knew was probably in his late 30s and a very attractive guy. He had several wives. One of them — Sarah — was educated in America and became friendly with my wife. My wife volunteered at the UN (United Nations) Mission there. She and Sarah talked about liberating women and bringing them into the 20th century. But as I say, there were no rabid movements I knew about.

Q: Was there much spilling over from Ethiopia?

KELLY: There were some refugees from — Eritreans. Eritrea hadn't got its independence at that time and was still part of Ethiopia. But a number of Eritreans did work that the Sudanese would not do, especially domestic women's work. We had an Eritrean mother's helper or nanny. You couldn't get a Sudanese woman for that.

Q: OK, you left there in '65?

KELLY: In '65. Not long after Kennedy was shot.

Q: Yeah. How did that go? I mean, you know, in many places it really hit a lot of people you wouldn't think would have been affected.

KELLY: Yes. And that includes the Sudanese. I don't know how much was — formality of coming to our embassy with regrets, but I thought a lot was heartfelt, and they shared the shock that we Americans felt. I think it was beyond doing the polite thing.

Q: Yeah, I was in Yugoslavia at the time and all the flags were half-mast and I mean there was a tremendous sympathy. I think it was really a generational thing. Here was a young, attractive man where most of the countries were run by rather —

KELLY: Well, he represented hope for a better world. The hope that I think was shared around the world that this attractive young man was going to somehow bring better times to the world.

Q: It's hard to, you know, today to — for people to understand. I mean this was a worldwide event.

KELLY: He was a world symbol — of a good future.

Q: Yeah. OK, well Giles this is probably a good place to stop and we'll pick this up the next time. You let the Sudan in '65 and whither?

KELLY: I want to say one thing more. The sailing and tennis there were important to me in that remote country. I played tennis at the Sudan Club. But the Sudan Club didn't have any Sudanese members. It was a British club that had continued after independence. It was the spot where all the British expatriates and diplomats would retreat from the Sudanese scene, to drink and play games and celebrate English customs and holidays. So I played tennis there regularly. Hard courts would not work in the Sudan because the reflection of the heat would be overwhelming, so they had grass courts. And they had to have a number of them so that there would be some soaked, some drying out, and a few ready for play. They were in constant rotation.. And to play in that kind of weather you had to be well watered — I mean, you personally. They served a drink called a “lamoon”, which was made out of a combination of lemons and limes sweetened and iced. I well remember how good a big pitcher of it looked being brought to the court by a safragi with the ice tinkling in the pitcher. It was a perfect refresher for that dry climate.

Q: Sort of replication of the old colonial life to a certain extent.

KELLY: It was. It was an extension of it. These guys came out in their turbans and, and did their thing just as they had done I suppose when Kitchener was there.

Q: Yeah. OK, well where'd you go in '65?

KELLY: Back to Washington by way of England where I stopped to see old friends there, then back to the Department. I was asked what I'd like to do and I said, “Look, I know so little about the Department, left in such a hurry, that I'd like a job in the Department now rather than another overseas assignment. I thought the best place for me to get to know the place would be in the Bureau of Public Affairs

Q: OK, so we'll pick this up in '65 when you're Bureau of Public Affairs. This is with Giles Kelly on the 17th of December and we'll put it at the end here. So we'll pick this up the next time, but you want to —

KELLY: Wait. I should mention the Yale Law School graduate who was out there at the time to help the Sudanese write their constitution. Also, in 1962 I was promoted to the rank of captain in the Naval Reserve while there and I did my naval duty, so to speak, with the US fleet in the Persian Gulf.

Also, my wife had a serious health problem that affected me and my career quite a bit. Also, I sat next to Kim Philby, the Russian spy, at a lunch for him at the British Embassy

Q: The spy.

KELLY: The spy. At that time he was working, I believe, for the Manchester Guardian. I also chatted up a friendly Russian diplomat posted there. I should mention that the Chinese were building a residence right next to ours.

Q: When you say Chinese you're talking about the Mainland Chinese.

KELLY: Mainland Chinese. And there were two big US projects that were being undertaken while I was there. One was making the film called “Khartoum” and the other was building a Hilton Hotel.

Q: Charlton Heston, Laurence Olivier.

KELLY: Yes, but I didn't deal with them. I dealt with a fellow named Blumstein, who wanted to produce the film “Khartoum. This was my professional work. —

Q: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

KELLY: And also for my country I found myself at a little Sudanese nightclub called Elite Corner dancing with the head of Sudan Airways. That was Sudanese “high life.”

Q: OK, well we'll pick this up the next time around.

KELLY: Yes —Where I left off.

Q: I got it. OK. Today is the 3rd of January, and I wish everybody a happy new year. It's the first interview of 2011. This is with Giles Kelly. Giles, we left you, you're leaving Sudan. But something I'd like to — you put an addition on about your life in Sudan. And it strikes me, for a political officer that you're able to circulate — I mean it's basically a pretty small community, and you talked about playing tennis and all this. I would say this would be a great place — I'm not putting in sort of the secret intelligence, but a good way to find out what's going on because it's small enough, particularly in those days, that you really could get a pretty good idea of who's doing what to whom and all that sort of stuff.

KELLY: Yes. Since I had been in intelligence I was sort of tuned in to who in Sudan is CIA and who is British Secret Service, and what concerns they might have about the Chinese or the Russians there. That wasn't my job but I could guess what the CIA station chief was worried about, which made life more interesting for me.

Q: Was the equivalent of — what do they call it, the Islamic Brotherhood or, you know, this radical movement in Egypt — was that reflected down there?

KELLY: No, not at the time. It might have been at the university; I wasn't acquainted with that. I was covering economics and commerce. Even in the country team meetings I don't recall that a political officer talked much about the Brotherhood or about any radical movements in higher education at that time there. But later that is where it all came to a head and spilled out.

Q: Was sort of the lower half of the Sudan — which as of I don't know the next few days I guess they're going to have an election down there — but was there anything like an independence movement or any thought of it or anything like that?

KELLY: I traveled down there and, again, I wasn't looking at the political side. I was interested in what was being produced and what the economic and commercial outlook was. But I would say, Stu, that there was no movement for an independent state. There was a good deal of resentment toward the Arabs in the north for not giving them opportunities or their fair share of living in the country. That is to say, they were not given jobs, they were not given facilities, road building, schools, libraries that were being enjoyed in the north. So there was a feeling of discontent from the standpoint of what was — they felt was their right as a member of the Sudan nation. But nothing then about a separate state.

Q: Well, were you picking up anything from Christian missionaries who were — obviously Christian memories don't get anywhere in Islamic area, but in the south where it was mainly Animist and Christian, were they at all a factor, the missionaries?

KELLY: Yes. And what I've just said I picked up more from the missionaries than I did from talking to the natives, because many of the natives did not speak much English and didn't care to talk particularly with me. But I was talking with the local officials who were indigenous and a few of the missionaries. That's where I heard of inequality treatment.

Q: Yeah. It's sort of a racial thing too. The north was Semitic and the south was Nubian, or whatever you want to call it.

KELLY: Absolutely. They were either Christian or Animist.

Q: OK. Well, then you left the Sudan when?

KELLY: In 1964. I headed back home, stopping in London to see old friends and have a little rest. I had a feeling at that time, since I had been almost immediately sent to the Sudan when I joined the Foreign Service that I needed to get familiar with the State Department. So I said I would like to have a tour in the Department and I thought it'd be great to be in the Bureau of Public Affairs because that would provide wide contacts in the Department. So that became my assignment.

Q: OK, you were in the Bureau of Public Affairs from when to when?

KELLY: From early '64 to'70. But I did have a break. In '68 I was recalled by the Navy for active duty.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KELLY: At State I was head of Conferences and Speaking Arrangements. At one of our foreign affairs conferences at the Department for top officers in the Executive Branch, there were several admirals, I let them know I was pleased they came, and that I was a captain of the Naval Reserve. I said I thought that the Navy and the State Department were natural brothers in arms, so to speak wherever we met in the world. Later I was asked: “Would you like to come back on active duty?” I said, only if I can get leave from the State Department. I didn't want to go permanently back in to military service. This was during Vietnam and they said that my skills as a public affairs officer were needed.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KELLY: So I was ordered to Norfolk to the headquarters of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) there. It was a joint naval headquarters for our navy and for NATO Navy. I served on the admiral's staff. I dined in the admiral's mess for lunches, and hobnobbed with several of the foreign admirals. It was a wonderful experience including promoting support for NATO in this country and accompanying the admiral abroad in his private plane. It was an interesting job. I had a staff three officers and about 15 men.

Q: How long were you doing that?

KELLY: Just for one year.

Q: OK, well let's go back to the time when you came back in '64? When you were in Bureau of Public Affairs. Who was the head of Public Affairs at that point?

KELLY: The assistant secretary for public affairs? I cannot recall. There was a wonderful black woman who was deputy assistant of public affairs and my pal. I really liked and admired her a lot. She's now passed on —

Q: Let's see, there's James Greenfield and —

KELLY: Greenfield. That's who.

Q: No, they don't have it here (in a book)—

KELLY: She was a lovely tall black woman.

Q: Well, when you went off to the Navy was when we really started beefing up our presence in Vietnam. This must have been — Vietnam must have pretty well dominated what you were doing.

KELLY: It did. Rusk was secretary at the time and as chief of speaking arrangements I made arrangements for some of his speaking trips and sometimes accompanied him.

It was exactly what I wanted to do, to get to know the Secretary of State, and see how State worked within our own country when looking for support for the foreign policy, and to promote understanding of the Foreign Service, which was then lacking in my view.

Q: Well first place, what was your impression of Dean Rusk and how he handled things from your contact with him?

KELLY: I wasn't on his staff so all I knew was from traveling with him, flying in a special airplane with him or at a hotel with him or while waiting to do a speaking arrangement. I can only tell you about one sort of example.

Q: That's what I like.

KELLY: I made a speaking arrangement for him in Chicago. I think it's called the economic or executive council. I accompanied him to the hall where he was to speak. The arrangement he wanted was, instead of taking questions from the floor after his speech, he wanted the questions written on a piece of paper and sent up. I was to receive the questions and sort them to avoid duplicates, edit them and give them some priority. I then handed them over to Rusk. After it was all over he turned to me as he was leaving and said, “Kelly, come with me.” I didn't like his tone and I feared he was upset with me about the job I did. We got into the elevator to his special suite, the VIP suite. He still didn't say anything to me. in the elevator

I thought, “This is bad.”

I followed him into the suite. He sat down in a big chair and asked the waiter for a bourbon and water, his usual drink. He said, “Kelly, what'll you have?”

“A Coke would be just fine, sir.” I said in a thin voice. He then took a long swig and he looked at me. I thought here it comes, I'm fired! There was a moment of silence. Then...

“Kelly, tell me how do you think I did tonight?” Wow! I realized here was a lonely man. I was the only person he could talk with. His wife wasn't around. He just wanted to unwind and perhaps get some encouragement from me.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: And that made me feel important for a moment.

Q: It really does show the problem of — I mean this is a time of terrible stress. I mean he had eight years of one of our most wrenching times. I mean right now we're going through a difficult time with a couple of wars going on, but we've had three or four different secretaries of state. And here was a guy that took it all.

KELLY: And the country was divided and —The Domino Theory, remember that?

Q: Oh yeah. Well, did you find that the questions were basically hostile?

KELLY: Quite often. There were demonstrations. There were signs. He'd get out of the car and there'd be a group of students and young people with anti war signs. That's because of the advance publicity that he was going to come to speak. So yes, there was a lot of hostility.

Q: Well, when you're sorting out the questions did you — I mean if somebody says, “We think your policy stinks,” or something like that, would you — I mean did you — were you sorting it out for decorum or were you sorting it out so they didn't duplicate, or what?

KELLY: Primarily to pick questions I felt were interesting and to sort out duplicates or questions on different subjects. So that's where I thought maybe I'd gone wrong, that I'd give him questions that he'd rather not answer.

Q: Well, you know, as one gets into this thing sometimes it's better to answer questions straight on. I mean they're difficult, but it's — you come out better in the long run. How was he as a person that had to handle questions?

KELLY: Well, I thought he did well. I mean I thought gee, some of these questions are tough, how the hell would I answer them? And then I — he was smooth and he, he could draw on history and on his own connections within the administration so that he would be pretty convincing, I thought. I was convinced that the domino effect was what we were dealing with.

Q: Even today when one looks at it, I don't discount the domino thing. I mean I think that we might have had a completely different situation in Indonesia if we hadn't been there, because I think Sukarno would have taken it down the path of full cooperation with the communists and maybe into the communist camps and that would have taken an awful lot of manipulating and pressure and everything else for us for years to come, years afterwards. I mean one can argue this, but I don't think it's something can be discounted.

KELLY: Certainly not. Thank goodness it didn't happen.

Q: Yeah. Well, then also Rusk's background is being basically a poor southern boy and not sort of an elite looking down your nose at people, I think gave him much more credibility than if we'd had somebody who was out of the prep school and — Yeah, that society. I mean he was — basically poor dirt farmer stock.

KELLY: But he was a scholar. And I think that he almost was like a professor sometimes talking with the students.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: He lectured, but I don't know that people trusted him, that he was that convincing. I think that he didn't really turn many minds on these trips.

Q: I doubt if any. Did you pick up the other, almost his twin on the other side, George Ball? And George Ball was sort of kept on as the discipline disagreer or something. I don't know, but you know what I —

KELLY: I didn't pick up on that, Stu. I didn't know George Ball. I didn't work with him. He was a big man and — but I haven't got any comment really.

Q: All right. Well look, did you get involved — I talked to many people. Thank God I never got involved in it, but we were sending Foreign Service officers out as sort of young lieutenants going over the top in the trenches to talk to all sorts of groups where they were getting mauled by the particularly students and all. Did you get involved in that program?

KELLY: No, the lectures that I arranged didn't seem to have that problem For instance, I'd arrange for a Foreign Service officer to talk to visiting 4H kids in Washington. They'd want somebody from the seventh floor to talk to them. You'd never get any difficulty, demonstrations or arguments from them. They were all very polite. And especially the groups that came into the department. I hosted or arranged more talks in the department than I sent people out.

Q: You've always alluded to, but how did you feel about the Vietnam War and our commitment there?

KELLY: I was with the administration 100%. I was appalled at the street reactions and the over-the-top kind of treatment of government representatives by the young people in colleges. I didn't share their view at all. I was very comfortable with the administration and what they were doing. Now of course I look back on that and think, oh boy, I must have been blind.

Q: Well, one can reopen that wound again and again and look at it. I think with age one can be a little more sympathetic on both sides.

KELLY: Well, you know, I fought in one war and I was afraid the next would be against communists. I thought they were powerful. They were taking over parts of the world. And I thought they had to be stopped but I didn't see how to hell to stop them if not by war.

Q: I subscribed to that. Well, then in your year with NATO were you picking up sort of rifts within NATO over Vietnam? I mean other countries, you know, they were all technically with us but —

KELLY: Well, no, I did not — Of course it was not NATO's business to consider the war in Vietnam. The main question was, are our allies prepared to deal with the Soviet Union. The discussions, the attitude and the interests is what we focused on. You might hear occasionally of resources being put into Vietnam. There was a war going on there, but at NATO we were focusing on Europe.

Q: This was a period, I think, when the Soviet Union had developed a Blue Water Navy, as they say. I mean, they put a tremendous amount of investment into building up their — navy. How did we view it at the time?

KELLY: We were reacting in kind, or at least we were strengthening our naval forces and we were coordinating with other NATO member naval forces. That was what I was interested in. At NATO Norfolk we organized joint maneuvers with treaty member forces. We'd have one in the Atlantic and then one in the Mediterranean. And we would react when Russian submarines or Russian forces showed off their abilities.

It was a time when I thought NATO was doing very well in getting everybody to cooperate, that is, have the same type of equipment and procedures. NATO would have naval exercises with maybe six different nations and sometimes more. Ships would exercise together and communicate in English. We were consolidating resources, realizing that the Soviets were strengthening theirs. It was “Cold War” thinking.

Q: Did you get any impression of the relative abilities of the various navies in NATO or?

KELLY: Of course some were better than others, but the British and US were the leaders The Dutch and the Danish were very smart. NATO standards were being upgraded continually. That was an objective that we discussed in our conferences and directives.

Q: Now, did Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, is that out of your area?

KELLY: No. in fact, I visited the NATO naval headquarters at Naples. The admiral was commander of your Sixth Fleet and the NATO forces in the Mediterranean. So he was double hatted there. NATO ran exercises in the Mediterranean just as in the North Atlantic.

Q: Well, I would think things in the Mediterranean were probably based on within the first six hours you know who was going — I mean things would happen very quickly there.

KELLY: —Going to happen in Turkey and the strait? We would try to bottle up the Russia Black Sea Fleet by closing the strait.

Q: Did you have any feel for the Greek-Turkish confrontation?

KELLY: No, just what I read in the paper. At NATO headquarters the Greeks and the Turks seemed to get along fine. We were all staff under the Secretary General at NATO headquarters and I didn't feel there was any animosity there between those two. I had friends from both of those countries I would lunch with them or go on trips with them and saw no animosity at all.

Q: Well, in 1970 you left sort of the State Department and NATO business and where'd you go?

KELLY: I came back to the Department after my one-year of NATO duty.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: And personnel said well, you're a NATO expert now so we have a job for you in Brussels on the International Staff. I then joined the Bureau of European Affairs and prepared for Belgium.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KELLY: That happened in 1970.

Q: And you did that was from when to when?

KELLY: '70 to'74.

Q: What was your responsibility?

KELLY: As a civilian I continued in public affairs including coordination of NATO public affairs in all the NATO countries. That included providing broadcasts, films, publications and speaking teams. Also, because of my military background, I was assigned to work with military public affairs officers of the various air forces, navies, and armies. I have one photo of about 20 female officers from all the NATO countries who work in public affairs. All in distinct uniforms. It was scary. I was doing double duty in PR on the military side and on the civilian side.

Q: Who were our ambassadors with NATO around that time?

KELLY: Rumsfeld. I knew Rumsfeld, though I was not on his staff. I was at times invited to his home.

Q: Well, some say he was a strong manager perhaps a mild way to describe how he dealt with his staff.

KELLY: Yes, At that time he was thought of as “the boy wonder.” Not much likedat NATO headquarters. He was abrasive.

Q: But when you had him this was before he had gained this— How was he at your time?

KELLY: You see I didn't work under him. I was getting impressions from his staff that he was hard nosed, a strong man who irritated a lot of people. His DCM (deputy chief of mission) was very nice, very well liked. He was the opposite of Rumsfeld. He became a career minister. I take it Rummy was much the same kind of person when he was secretary of defense.

Q: Were you there during the Soviet's SS-20 challenge within the intermediate rocket?

KELLY: No

Q: I think it came a little later anyway. What were your main issues that you had to deal with?

KELLY: It was the fact that all of us at NATO headquarters felt that we didn't have a strong public constituency. I was trying to sell NATO, trying to encourage each country to sell NATO to its citizens, so more resources could be committed to the alliance in men, arms, and money. And how do we do that? By publications, films and speakers. I used to take teams of four speakers, each from a different country, and do a “dog and pony show” in the US going from one city to another. On such a team I would typically have a Frenchman, a Norwegian, and a Greek, all spoke English well and could speak about NATO to a college or foreign affairs audiences.

Q: Mm-hmm.

KELLY: Often we'd get a write-up in a newspaper with a photo saying what NATO is about and how important it is. Then I could feel “Mission was accomplished.”

Q: Well, did you find at that time, particularly in Germany and France, within the university audiences a pretty strong support for NATO?

KELLY: I wouldn't say strong support. I would say, young people, didn't feel it was so important. And we were trying to indicate how important NATO was in the Cold War situation. I think that talking with groups of older people was easier, they were more concerned with international affairs and military affairs, and were thus supportive of NATO. But it was more difficult at universities and with young people.

Q: Well, we were getting farther and farther away from World War II and the immediate — and the Soviet occupation of so much of Europe.

KELLY: On the whole, we had good audiences and good reaction in the United States. It made a difference having foreigners talk to them. Americans don't often have a Frenchman and a Norwegian talk to a college groups or to a world affairs group. It increased interest. To me it was very rewarding to go around the country with my teams and raise interest in NATO. Each team member had a certain aspect of NATO to speak on. Besides the work, we had fun as a group on and offstage. Onstage they could be sometimes very entertaining.

Q: Well, you did this what, for four years?

KELLY: Yes. Up to '74

Q: And then what?

KELLY: After four years, the question was what to do next. By that time I had spent 24 years as some sort of government official, and unless something interesting came up, I felt retirement at the relatively young at age 53 had great possibilities. I could do what I pleased, or do nothing, knowing I would have a modest income for the rest of my life.So I retired.

Q: After you retired you got very much involved in the Antarctic, didn't you?

KELLY: I went to the Antarctic. But that was well before I retired. It was in the late '60s. It was one of those two weeks of active training duty in the Navy. I asked a couple of Princeton friends at the Pentagon “Can you fix me up with a couple of weeks of good training duty?” And they came up with escort duty to Antarctic for a group of foreign officers. That was interesting duty. I even wrote a “Post Report” about it for the Foreign Service Journal. OK, after retirement I first ran a sailing school and worked for the Smithsonian taking foreign visitors, Norwegians, Lebanese, around the United States. They were dancers and musician performers. I had a two-man staff and we went “on the road” to cities as planned by the Smithsonian. There was a divorce at that time.

Also, I had some GI (Government Issue) left-over college credits so I signed up at American University for a course in art, writing, and television. And while I was at AU I noticed a ridiculous course in canoeing, so I thought, why not sailing? I went to the head of the physical education department to suggest I teach a course in sailing. I think having a master's degree helped. Anyway, they appointed me an adjunct professor. I taught sailing, seamanship, and navigation a couple of years. During summers and winter vacations I took students down to the Caribbean to cruise on chartered sailboats. Being with college kids on sailboats in the Caribbean Virgin islands was great fun.

Q: Yeah, great. Did you run across sort of the overindulgent party life that I understand — I mean not the college kids, but the wealthy have with their boats sometimes?

KELLY: Not really. I knew that this was about the best cruising area in the world, around the British and U.S. Virgin Islands. So when I started teaching — these kids that had enough money would say that they could pitch in to charter one, two, or three boats and sail among those islands. So it wasn't necessarily an upper crust thing with everyone pitching in. But I got a free ride. And we had some great times.

Q: It's been documented elsewhere, but I wonder if you could talk about you and the Sequoia bit.

KELLY: Yes I wrote a book about the Sequoia. It all started while I was teaching at AU. One of my students was a caretaker on this famous boat that had been bought by a trust and brought back to Washington from Florida where it had been decaying. The idea was that they would raise funds to restore her and return her to the government as a gift to the American people. But they didn't have a full time captain for her. They would hire some qualified local guy for a trip to Alexandria or to Mount Vernon. Then he was off the boat. So they were looking for someone to take care of the boat full time. The student caretaker suggested they talk to me. So they interviewed me and I was hired. But the boat was in poor condition.

Q: What's a Sequoia?

KELLY: A giant tree.

Q: You might explain what the background of the boat was.

KELLY: Well, the Sequoia was privately built in 1925 for a wealthy Philadelphia family. They were more or less competing with other rich families at that time to have the best yacht down in Palm Beach during the winter. The Sequoia was for that purpose. But after a year or so they decided the Sequoia was not big or grand enough, so they sold her. The Sequoia went through several hands — but when the depression occurred she was bought by the government to be used as a patrol boat in the Chesapeake to catch rum runners. Looking like an expensive yacht they'd try to sell liquor to her, but they'd get arrested. She was owned by the Department of Commerce at that point and was also used to enforce labor laws in the fishing industry.

At that time Hoover was in office and his presidential yacht was out of service. So he requisitioned the Sequoia. As a fisherman, he thought she was good for fishing. He also used her to travel to the Virginia Capes for an anniversary of first English arrival at the Virginia Capes. He liked her so much that he also sent her down to Charleston where

he picked her up for fishing in Florida. So he was the first president to use her. He was followed by seven other presidents to use her. That would be Roosevelt and —

Q: Truman.

KELLY: Truman, Eisenhower, Nixon, Johnson and the last president was Ford. Ford took his whole cabinet for a cruise, which gave the Secret Service fits. They didn't want all of them in one boat.

When the trust brought her back to Washington. They expected to fix her up for presidents to use. They wanted me to oversee her restoration. Their idea was to send her around the country so people could see her and perhaps chip in to help with their idea of returning her as a gift of the American people. They offered cruises on the Potomac for $5,000 to Mount Vernon. Then they also decided for me to take her on a 6,000-mile voyage along the waterways of America as far as Texas. then up the Mississippi and through the Great Lakes.

I did that. It was a very interesting challenge and fun to see how much people appreciated the Presidential Yacht. Some were in awe of her history which could be appreciated through the photos on board and our talk about her. And after I'd done that cruise and overseen a two million dollar restoration program, they wanted to send her on another trip up the Mississippi. I wasn't interested in doing it again. I contended there is little money up the Mississippi, instead take her along the East Coast where the money is. The Trust persisted. I resigned. A man I'd trained became the new captain for the trip. Not much money was raised. The Trust went bankrupt trying to keep the boat going. Congressional support faded. I was disappointed. She was laid up in 1989. In the year 2000 she was bought from the shipyard by a private person and again brought back to Washington this time to be put into commercial use. She's here now and in good shape.

Q: I would think that this would be a little difficult to navigate. You know, I read Mark Twain's Mississippi book, but also I mean it's a very powerful river and changing topography the whole time. Was it difficult?

KELLY: It was, and I am pleased you recognize the difficulties. One of the things that helped was meeting a pilot in New Orleans. I contemplated going up the Mississippi in May, which meant that there was a lot of debris coming down as the ice and winter waters were flowing down. I also had received a notice from the army engineer that they were going to close one of the locks I had to pass through. They were going to close it in June. And I thought, my God, I could get all the way up to this lock and it would be closed and all I could do was turn around and come back down. And I would be working against about a four or five-knot current. And the Sequoia only does 10 knots at best.

Q: I've, you know, looked at the Mississippi I remember at St. Louis and boy oh boy, I mean that — that's powerful.

KELLY: Well, this pilot, was officially a river pilot for only between New Orleans and the Delta. But he knew the upper river too. So I took him and his wife aboard as guests. He showed me how to run the back currents. and make time, as the Mississippi runs there are whirlpools and short cuts to take.

Q: Yeah.

KELLY: He showed me how to avoid the strongest currents. In fact, we got a little push upstream at times. I was helped by him as far up as Memphis. Then another nice thing happened. At Vicksburg I met the big sternwheeler Mississippi Queen.

Q: Something like that, or the Robert E. Lee? Those names spring —

KELLY: I was invited to have lunch with the captains and I mentioned I was apprehensive of going on to St. Louis because of debris in the river. The captain of the Queen said, you

can follow me. “We do about eight knots. You follow right behind us and we'll clear the way for you.” So that's what we did as far as St. Louis. From there we went up the Illinois River, which wasn't a problem until we got to a railroad bridge that I couldn't get under and didn't open. So I had get a derrick to take off our smoke stack, mast and the awnings on the upper deck so we could squeeze under, then put it all back t again on the other side of the bridge.

Q: Well —

KELLY: We sailed into Chicago one noon. The bridges were raised for the Sequoia escorted by police boats. When we docked, the mayor came aboard and oh, it was big stuff.

Q: Well, and then you went back down the Mississippi.

KELLY: No. We went through the Great Lakes.

Q: The Saint Lawrence Seaway or?

KELLY: — Through the Welland locks that join Lake Erie with Lake Ontario. Then we exited at Oswego, New York and joined up with the Erie Canal. That took us to Albany and the Hudson. We stopped at West Point. The commandant came aboard. In turn, I was invited to review the troops. We went on to New York Bay and down the Atlantic Coast, along the Atlantic, and into the Delaware Bay, then into the Chesapeake Bay and back home. Mayor Barry and a band were on the dock to celebrate our arrival back in Washington after six months.

Q: Oh boy. Well, as a retired FSO (Foreign Service Officer) it's kind of hard to top that, but what have you been doing since?

KELLY: I left the yacht in 1988. I enjoyed my wedding in '84. Ann was with me on the long trip as photographer and purser. The Trust had expected to produce a book on

the Sequoia. However, after I left and the Sequoia fell again on hard times, the trust lost interest in the book. But we had photos, so we decided to write the book and find a publisher. We did a year of research, checking with presidential libraries and newspapers for history and old photos. I organized, with the help of Sequoia's new owner, a reunion of some of Sequoia's old navy alumni. We got them aboard the Sequoia and heard their stories about the yacht which we to put into the book.

After the book was published we did as most retirees do, we traveled. I had an advantage: as military retirees do, I could fly on military planes when space was available. Thus we flew at times at no cost.

Q: Well Giles, I think this is a good place to stop. I want to thank you very much. We appreciate this.

KELLY: I appreciate your interest and your help in bring up these memories.

End of interview